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WEATHER REPORT

Nuke workers zapped

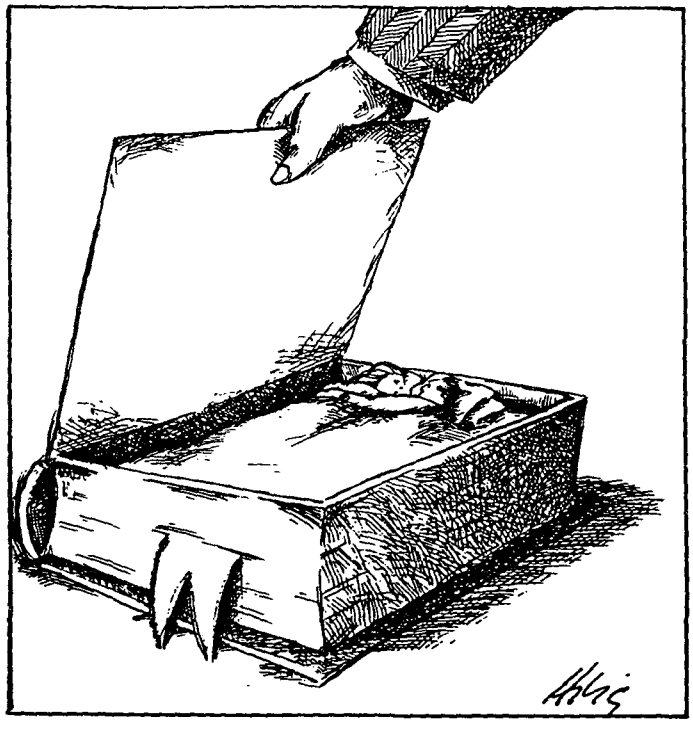
Records of the US Nuclear Regulatory Commission reveal that over 93,000 workers at 83 nuclear power plants were exposed to measurable amounts of radiation in 1985, the most recent year for which data is available. The data, obtained by Public Citizen, also demonstrates that older plants are far more likely to endanger workers than newer ones. For example, plants that began operating during the 1960s exposed workers to four times as much radiation as the newest plants; and those that started up between 1970 and 1974 exposed their workers to more than twice as much.

If you believe this you're not typical

A recent Roper poll finds that television is the most believed and relied-upon source of news. For the first time, 50% of the American public "cite only television as their main source of news." In 1959, 57 percent of respondents listed newspapers as a main source of news as opposed to 36% in the most recent survey. The figures for television were 51% in 1959 and 66% in 1987.

Jackson running well

Jesse Jackson's campaign for the Democratic presidential nomination looks as if it is better organized and more broadly based than his 1984 run. Writing of Jackson's appeal to non-black audiences, Tom Wicker of the New York Times recently commented, "If you think Jesse Jackson is just the 'black candidate' for president, you'd better think again — and listen." Wicker noted Jackson's recent successes with an all-white college audience in Iowa and at a New York City political party. In Iowa, where Jackson is running hard, editor Jim Gannon of the Des Moines Register says: "I haven't seen anyone come into Iowa with a message as appealing as his. When he asks why the government can bail out Chrysler and Continental Illinois but can't save a farmer from foreclosure — that's a question that plays on Main Street, Iowa."



New Englanders think green

The League of Conservation Voters says that congressional members from New England had the best voting record on environmental issues in the last Congress. New Englanders voted pro-environment 79% of the time in the Senate and 68% of the time in the House. Worst regional group were those from the Rocky Mountain states with scores of 27% in the Senate and 33% in the House.

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EPA gutted by Reagan

President Reagan's budget request for the Environmental Protection Agency, says the Environmental Policy Institute, would provide about the same purchasing power the agency had in 1976 before such major laws as those dealing with toxic wastes and contaminated groundwater were passed.

Arms for hostages (and drugs and sex)

Pointing out further seaminess in the Iran-Contra affair may seem redundant, but it should be noted that as of the start of congressional hearings the mainstream media had, for the most part, chosen to ignore or downplay both the drug and sex aspects of the affair. The former **was** featured in a CBS 'West 57th Street' program in April that included allegations that planes carrying Contra arms did not deadhead home, but carried drugs with them, in at least one case landing them at a US Air Force base. There is mounting evidence that the CIA played the Contras in much the manner that it previously played the game in post-WW II Europe and Southeast Asia: trading a liberal drug market for correct politics. Watch for hints of this in the hearings... Meanwhile, it took NPR to reveal a story widely known in Washington: the use of some of the Contra fundraising money to pay for the support of male lovers of key figures. The mainstream press, skittish of appearing to be gay-baiting, stayed away from this one even as they were having a field day with Fawn Hall.

Students interested in local issues

Student campaigns on various national and international issues appear to have lost steam this year, reports College Press Service. CPS's survey found more interest in local issues. For example, 5000 California college students turned out for a protest against state financial aid cuts in Sacramento, while only about a tenth that many converged on Washington to demonstrate against the Reagan administration's massive cuts. In 1983, a similar protest had brought 7000 students to the capital. Similarly, while anti-apartheid demonstrations dwindled this year, 3500 students at the University of Arizona staged a sit-in to complain about cuts in library hours.

Mini-condos for the homeless

A San Francisco architect has designed an 8x4x4 foot plywood shelter for the homeless that he's calling the "City Sleeper." He's built several prototypes and placed them in his office parking lot, where they're currently being occupied by George and Clinton. Architect Donald MacDonald says, "It's a disgrace for the city to squander $5 million a year cramming (the homeless) into squalid hotels when they could be independently sheltered for 800 bucks apiece, labor included, or $500 for materials alone on a do-it-yourself basis." MacDonald's shelters are made out of 4x8 plywood panels which are screwed together and caulked, to help retain the heat. They have a sliding window and a "front door" that is hinged on top so it can serve as a canopy during the day. They are mounted 18" above the ground with automobile jacks which keep the shelter level. Each shelter has a foam mattress, clothes locker, shelf and hangars. MacDonald, isan innovative architect who describes his approach as "nonjudgmental, non-reformist," thinks that no more than two or three Sleepers should be placed at any one location. And George, who has given up drinking since he moved in, likes it: "There's plenty of food available in San Francisco. It's easy to get clothing. You don't have to be dirty in this town. There are showers. Medical care is no problem. The only problem is finding a place to sleep."

The Carter Case

Although the media played up the celebrity angle, the big story on the Amy Carter acquittal is that a jury, faced with evidence of CIA misdoings, refused to convict. The local district attorney, W. Michael Ryan Jr., said after the acquittal: "If there is a message, it was that this jury was composed of middle America. It was a great jury for us. They weren't kids. There were a couple of senior citizens. And they believed the defense. Middle America doesn't want the CIA doing what they are doing." While the motivations of the jurors is unknown (they may have simply accepted defense arguments that the trespassing and

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POLL

acts of terror in postwar Europe: the 1980 bombings at the Bologna train station, which left 85 dead and 200 injured, and at the Munich Oktoberfest, which left 11 dead and 200 injured. Other incidents attributed to neo-Nazi groups include the June '82 Nuremberg disco attack, in which two GIs and an Egyptian national were killed, and four other '82 bombings at US Army bases in Germany.

Rebelling against SATs

Middlebury and Union College have announced that they will drop SATs as an entrance requirement. The two colleges join Bates and Bowdoin, which earlier had dropped the SATs. The decision reflects the concern that SATs are biased against women and minorities and are not that good an indicator of college performance. A dean at Middlebury also noted that students who can afford to be coached for the SATs can score up to 100 points higher than would otherwise be the case.

• Research into early 19th century Missouri death records has produced some curious medical reports, according to the American Medical News. Among the causes of death listed were:

"Went to bed feeling well, but woke up dead."

"Died suddenly, nothing serious."

"Cause of death unknown; had never been fatally ill before."

"Don't know; died without the aid of a physician."

"Death caused by blow on the head with an ax. Contributory cause, another's man's wife."

FLOTSAM & JETSAM

The fate of the tough

As we have discovered in the case of nuclear plants, stopping the bad is not enough. It turns out that the evil men do not only lives after them but with an increasingly lengthy half-life. Thus those watching the unravelling of the current administration should restrain their glee at least to the extent of considering the serious environmental problem of safe and feasible Reaganesque waste disposal.

Some of this waste matter obviously consists of bad legislation, regulations and the misapplication of funds to support them. But beyond that is an assortment of principles, myths and nostrums that have polluted the groundwater of American culture. It is hard to know where to begin, there being no Superfund for the removal of toxic philosophy, but I would urge for starters an assault on acid phraseology, beginning with the word **tough.**

The decade of the 80s, although it has accomplished little salutary other than the spread of Velcro and mini-vans, has prided itself on being the era of the tough. The overuse of this word may partially be one more legacy of the Vietnam War, which provoked in many an obsession with proving that they were neither as weak nor as stupid as that disastrous engagement suggested. But whatever the nourishment, there is little doubt that America has spent an inordinate amount of

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effort in recent years showing how tough it is. Because of our tendency to equate the declaration with the deed, much of this alleged toughness has been little more than braggadocio, but this too has made people feel better.

Count the ways Americans have seen themselves as tough:

We have had a tough military policy.

We have been tough on welfare cheats, illegal immigrants and their employers, drunk drivers, druggies, pornographers, repeat offenders, terrorists, white-collar criminals and Howard Stern.

We have demanded a return to basics in education and have gotten tough on those who fall below our standards. Joseph Biden is advocating a new school year, longer and presumably tougher than the old.

We have so toughened our stand against murder that death row stories have become commonplace.

We have learned the principle of "tough love" in dealing with our children.

We have taken a tough-minded approach to government expenditures, making clear distinctions between the deserving and the undeserving poor. As we have done so, those in the former class have, by our calculations, markedly dwindled and those in the latter markedly increased.

We have gotten tough on our doctors, our journalists and each other, by suing for sums unheard of a few years back.

Our movies and our television have gotten tough, inspired by such models as Sylvester Stallone and Clint Eastwood.

It has become almost impossible to find a politician who has not recommended a tough new law to deal with something or other.

We have made ourselves tougher by finding ever more drastic tests of our fitness, progressing, as it were, from jogging to marathons to triathalons.

We have hung tough, stayed tough and gotten going when the going got tough.

We have increasingly approached major problems as wars: a war on drugs, a war on AIDs, a war on obscenity. And war is tough.

Those issues that do not rate full-battle dress are handled in a manner aimed not at cajoling or encouraging us into the ways of righteousness but designed to shock us into goodness. Thus the television ads showing the cocaine addict floundering in the toilet stall, and the posters plastered with the protruded bare stomach of the pregnant girl ("If you think a pimple is bad") or of tortured animals. And in one corner of Washington's Mall a museum of the Holocaust is taking shape, designed to leave its visitors appalled and shamed for their species. It is, in a way, a unintended monument to the Eighties as well, the capital's first tough museum, going up in the decade of the tough.

The problem with all this toughness has been two-fold. First, it turns out we are not all that tough and, second, being (or trying to be) all that tough doesn't work particularly well.

To cite just a few examples of the former failing, consider that during the era of toughness our children have become more obese, television holy men have turned out to be charlatans, Marines have willingly sacrificed their vaunted faithfulness for a little nooky, role models in business and politics have gone to jail for assorted weaknesses in astonishing number, and sports heroes have turned out to be junkies or drugstore behemoths. Above all, it is hard to recall a time when America was so afraid of so many things.

Meanwhile, turning to the efficacy of toughness, during the same period America has piled up more debt than in its previous two centuries, has become a debtor nation in the world economy, has all but admitted that Adam Smith doesn't count when dealing with the Japanese, has declared as a public policy that there isn't enough vitality to the American economy to provide social welfare programs other industrialized countries take for granted, has so muffed its "war on drugs" that these substances have become a major part of the economy, has so failed in its "war on crime" that youth gangs in LA, for example, now number in the thousands, and has been so impotent in its war on terrorism that even the Reagan administration was reduced to paying vigorish for some relief.

Of all the frauds perpetrated on Americans during the Reagan years, the toughness scam may have been the worst. In the name of returning us to our roots, of making us strong again, we have turned into a economically shaky, philosophically confused, and psychologically paranoic society.

It is suggested in some quarters, such as by the Republicans and the crypto-Republicans of the so-called Democratic Leadership Council, that what we need is more of the same. Others — the better part of the Democratic presidential lot, run around the country saying, in essence, "Trust me." But hardly any on the national scene have the courage to suggest that at least part of our problem may be our preoccupation with toughness. What presidential candidate would dare tell Americans what Edmund Burke told his tough

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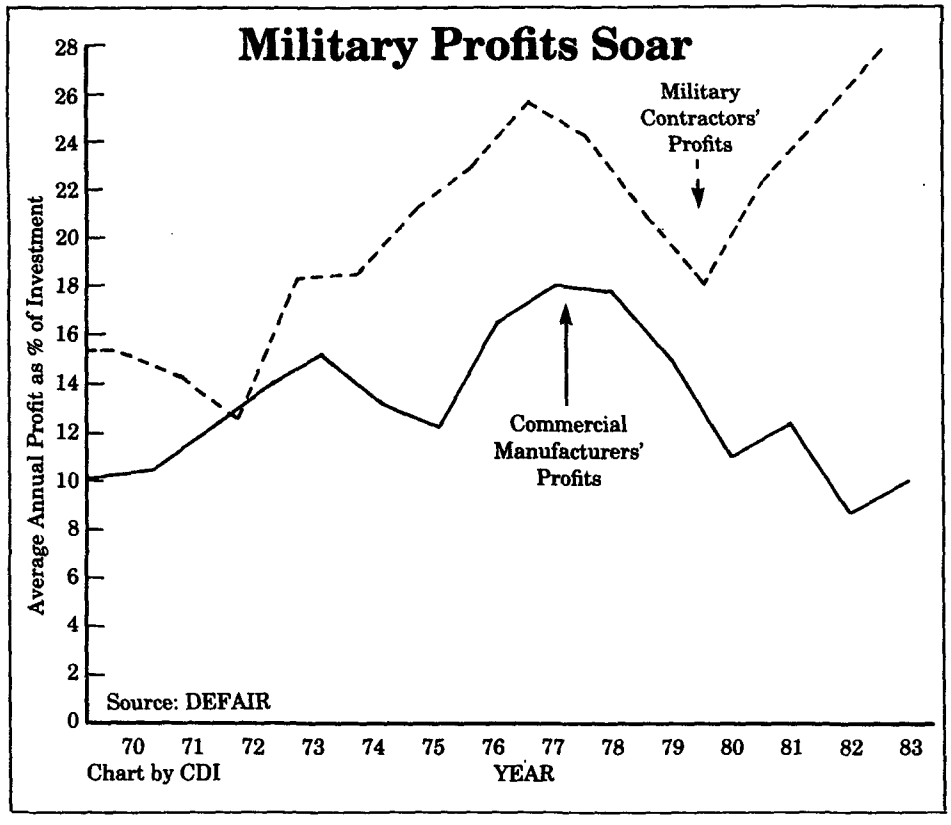

This chart, from the Center for Defense Information, shows how military contractor profits have soared compared to those of commercial manufacturers.

disorderly conduct charges were inapplicable), if the DA's interpretation is correct it would come close to being a rare example of what is known as jury nullification, the principle that a jury acts as a sort of legislature of last resort and may refuse to convict under unjust laws. The legal profession and the judiciary steadfastly refuse to inform juries of this important power, but, interestingly, the issue recently arose again in the Bernard Goetz case. Defense lawyer Barry Slotnick asked prospective jurors: "If you find that the prosecution has proved the case beyond a doubt, and if the judge instructs you that you must convict on that basis, would you feel obligated to do so?" According to Newsweek, the "judge warned the jurors that such a strategy would cause 'utter chaos' by 'overthrowing the rule of law' and increasing the chances of a hung jury." As America becomes increasingly authoritarian, however, the right of jury nullification may prove to be a highly significant one. (For more on this, see issue #236 of the Review & Gazette).

Rightist terrorism in Europe

Mother Jones magazine reports that US officials have consistently ignored the activity of right-wing terrorists in Europe, preferring to portray Moscow and the Arabs as the driving force behind an elaborate world terrorist network. Authors Martin A. Lee and Kevin Coogan report that neo-Nazi agitators "have bombed NATO bases and murdered American GIs stationed in western Europe," while providing "logistical support, arms, and financial counsel to the most extreme Arab terrorists, including those involved in the Black September organization and the Achille Lauro hijacking." The authors also detail the growing collaboration among European neo-Nazi groups and the surprising alliance between these groups and the far left. So-called "third position groups," like Terza Posizione in Italy, use the motto, "Hitler and Mao unified in struggle."

In spite of the massive coverage of the Achille Lauro hijacking, the American press failed to report that the list of prisoners to be exchanged for the hostages included Odfried Hepp, then one of West Germany's most-wanted neo-Nazi terrorists. According to the article, Hepp at one time worked with the Palestine Liberation Front, the same group which carried out the hijacking.

Mother Jones reports that the hundreds of terrorists attacks carried out by European right-wingers include the two most devastating

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British compatriots about the American colonies? Burke warned, "If you do not succeed, you are without recourse; for, conciliation failing, force remains; but, force failing, no further hope of conciliation is left."

And this is where we find ourselves after an decade of toughness. Our force has failed us and there seems little possibility to reconcile our people, our problems or our national accounts. Increasingly we speak in terms of inevitability: the permanent underclass, the irrevocably criminal, the irreversible damage to the ozone layer, the invincible national debt. It has been a heavy price to pay for our toughness. And if there is a way out it seems to lie with us aspiring to something other than more of the same. — **Sam Smith**

Lost lessons of Chernobyl

Scott Denman

As dusk crept across the pastoral Ukraine on April 25, 1986, few of its inhabitants could have conceived the ensuing tragedy that literally exploded into their lives early the next day. Soviet citizens had been told little or nothing of the inherent dangers of the nearby nuclear reactors. Reminiscent of spoon-fed platitudes from our own nuclear industry, the Soviet government boasted—just two months before the catastrophe — that the probability of an accident at Chernobyl was one in 10,000 years.

The rupture of the Chernobyl reactor, which had a containment system similar in principle to those used in 49 U.S. reactors and capable of withstanding pressures on a par with containments used in American plants, forever altered hundreds of thousands of lives and irrevocably shattered the myth of the peaceful atom.

Yevgeny Velikhov, Vice President of the Soviet Academy of Sciences and director of emergency response at Chernobyl, confirmed in a recent meeting with leaders of American environmental groups that 31 Russians died and 237 contracted acute radiation sickness. But the full impact of the disaster may not be known for years, perhaps generations. Cancer death estimates range from several thousand to hundreds of thousands. According to Velikhov, 300,000 individuals will be kept under observation for possible cancers and related illnesses for many decades.

More than 130,000 people were evacuated, many permanently, from a zone extending 19 miles from the reactor. Some 19,000 cattle were also evacuated and all agricultural products within the zone were destroyed. More than 1 million square feet of topsoil was bulldozed, dumped into steel containers, entombed by concrete and buried. Estimates vary, but the total cost of the accident may well exceed $10 billion.

What, if anything, has the U.S. learned from Chernobyl?

First, the Chernobyl accident reinforced a steadily-growing public dissatisfaction with nuclear power in the U.S. According to ABC News polls, 65 percent of the public in 1975 supported building more nuclear power plants. But by early 1985, prior to the Chernobyl accident, approximately 68 percent opposed new nuclear plant construction. That figure jumped to 78 percent shortly after the Chernobyl accident. Furthermore, according to a May 1986 *Wall Street Journal* poll, 70 percent of the public believes that because of the way U.S. nuclear power plants are built and regulated a similar disaster is likely to happen here.

But despite public concern, the nuclear industry and the Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC) continue to conduct business as usual. While the nuclear industry's safety record in the year of Chernobyl was seriously marred, its public relations juggernaut rolled on. The U.S. Committee for Energy Awareness, the pronuclear front group, spent millions in 1986 to convince Americans that nuclear power was essential and that Chernobyl "can't happen here."

Unfortunately, the industry's recent record suggests exactly the opposite. Last year was the worst year on record for the number of accidents at nuclear facilities—with more than 3,000 mishaps reported. For example, four workers were killed at the Surry II nuclear plant near Richmond, Virginia when a corroded steam pipe burst. At the Hatch nuclear facility in Georgia, 80,000 gallons of radioactive water leaked into a nearby swamp and the Altamaha River. In addition, widespread violations of NRC regulations reflected a continued decline in the nuclear industry's quality control.

In 1985, an NRC study revealed the probability of a severe core melt nearly 50/50 during the next 20 years and accidents involving containment failure would have major consequences for the public. This fact is particularly disturbing in light of another NRC study of the structural integrity of certain reactor containments.

The General Electric Mark I containment design is used in 24 nuclear power plants. In July 1985, the NRC found that "Mark I failure within the first few hours following core melt would appear rather likely." The NRC also reported that "early failure [is] quite likely" in Ice Condenser containments, designed for use in 10 U.S. plants. Actually, *all* types of containments used in U.S. reactors can fail during a severe core meltdown, according to the NRC report.

Unbelievably, in the wake of the Chernobyl disaster, the NRC has proposed to roll back emergency planning regulations by allowing utilities to operate nuclear reactors *without* state and locally approved evacuation plans. The genesis of requirements for state and local support for emergency evacuation plans was the President's Commission on Three Mile Island. A year after America's nearly cata-

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strophic accident, the NRC prudently adopted the regulation to attempt to ensure the safety of residents within a 10-mile zone of each reactor in the event of an accident.

In summary, for the American nuclear industry, Chernobyl appears to have been viewed as little more than a public relations opportunity to distance itself from its own dismal management and safety record. By pointing its finger at the Soviet nuclear program, the nuclear industry in this country has tried to make us forget its own serious shortcomings.

For the Nuclear Regulatory Commission, Chernobyl marked the continuation of the agency's full-court press to further centralize authority by excluding local officials and citizens from the nuclear power decision-making process.

Thus, the lesson of Chernobyl has been lost on most nuclear utility industry and government officials. On the other hand, public opinion is increasingly turning away from nuclear power, and citizen involvement in nuclear power issues is on the upswing. It is essential that citizens continue to learn from the tragedy and work together to create a safe, economical and environmentally-benign energy future with an orderly phase-out of our reliance on nuclear power.

(C) 1987 Safe Energy Communication Council. Scott Denman is director of SECC.

What's happening

The National Impeachment Coalition is proposing the impeachment not only of the president but of Vice President Bush and Edwin Meese because of the guns-for-cocaine aspects of the Contra operations, the mining of Nicaraguan harbors, waging secret wars, attempting to assassinate Khadaffi, and conspiracy to defraud the United States. Info: 1718 Conn. Ave. NW, DC 20009 (202:462-0517)

The Center for Innovative Diplomacy helps communities develop their own foreign policies. It has begun publishing a quarterly bulletin of municipal foreign policy, the first issue of

CORRECTION

In the last issue we said the size of the Pentagon's black budget was $35 million. The figure, of course, should have been $35 billion. You can't buy anything at the Pentagon for $35 million.

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which includes news that an Oregon agency sent the Russians a bill for $76,060 for damages caused by Chernobyl. Info: 17931 Sky Park Circle #F, Irvine, CA 92714.

The Institute for Transportation and Development Policy promotes "sustainable and ecologically sensible transportation policies for the Third World. The institute has already obtained 900 bikes for Nicaragua as part of its Bikes Not Bombs program. Bikes are also being sent to Haiti and the group is seeking changes in the American foreign aid law to increase awareness of low cost transport. Info: PO Box 5595, Friendship Station, DC 20016.

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